



LEEC

LOUISIANA ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATION COMMISSION

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A Weekly Compilation of Environmental Education News from Across Louisiana

LEEC NEWS

LEEC HOLDS "DISCOVERING BIODIVERSITY" WORKSHOP

Twenty-eight Louisiana teachers attended the June 25, 2015 Discovering Biodiversity workshop at Prien Lake Elementary School in Lake Charles.

Sponsored by the **Alcoa Foundation**, the day-long workshop used rare and endangered habitat types and animals in southwest Louisiana to introduce the concept of biodiversity, and provided teachers with materials and information ready to include in their classroom activities next fall. Teachers received a binder filled with lesson plans for every age group, supplemental maps and articles, and a website resources page; they also received a field guide book and endangered species video for classroom use.



Biologist Eric Baka gives teachers tips on using binoculars to identify birds.

Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Botanist Chris Reid presented the attendees with information about the coastal prairie, a rare habitat type once occurring in a dozen Southwest Louisiana parishes, but now existing in small fragments covering one percent of its former area. LDWF biologist Eric Baka showed workshop participants how to identify red cockaded woodpeckers, gave them background information about their nesting, feeding and breeding behaviors, and explained why they rely solely on the dwindling old-growth longleaf pine habitat once common in our state.

The next LEEC teacher workshop will be "Watershed Webs," held first as a day-long short course in conjunction with the February 2016 Environmental Education Symposium in Baton Rouge, then presented more in-depth via two separate 4-day events next summer. More information will be published in this newsletter, and on the commission website at <http://www.wlf.louisiana.gov/eec>.



Workshop participants engage in habitat discussion with botanist Chris Reid (far left).

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

EPA CLEAN WATER RULE WEBSITE

Following the May 27, 2015 enactment of the Clean Water Rule, the Environmental Protection Agency have put together a website full of resources including videos, infographics and articles regarding this important development in resource management.

As they recently announced in a press release, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army finalized the Clean Water Rule to clearly protect from pollution and degradation the streams and wetlands that form the foundation of the nation's water resources. The rule ensures that waters protected under the Clean Water Act are more precisely defined and predictably determined, making permitting less costly, easier, and faster for businesses and industry. The rule does not create any new permitting requirements for agriculture and maintains all previous exemptions and exclusions.

You and your students can research the reasoning behind the rule; how it affects businesses, communities and individuals; and what outcomes experts expect from it by visiting <http://www2.epa.gov/cleanwaterrule>.

BAYOU NEZPIQUE HELD UP AS POLLUTION REDUCTION SUCCESS STORY

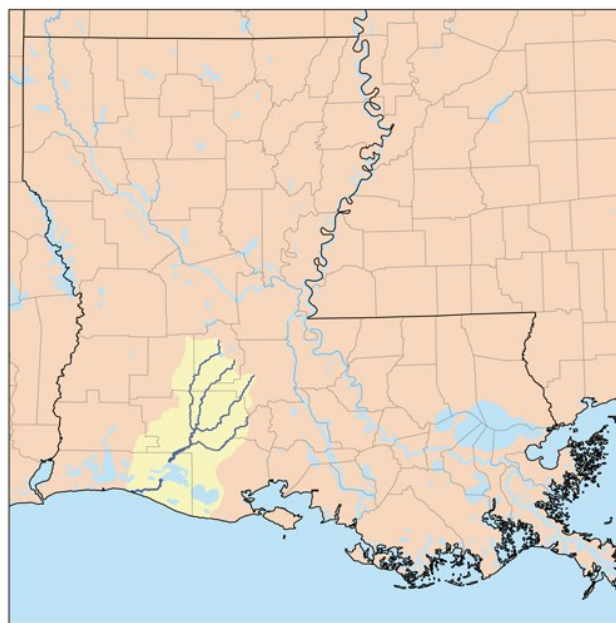
From the EPA website http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/nps/success319/la_bayou.cfm

Bayou Nezpique, which is 65 miles long and has a drainage area of 611 square miles, empties into the Mermentau River in southwestern Louisiana. The bayou is in the prairie region of the state, where rice and crawfish farms have been a dominant part of the landscape for many generations. Bayou Nezpique flows through the parishes of Evangeline, Acadia, Allen, and Jefferson Davis.

Agricultural area makes up approximately 23 percent of the watershed and contributes the most significant portion of runoff and excess nutrients entering the bayou.

Runoff from fields after recent tillage, fertilizer applications, and other field operations can contain higher levels of sediments and pollutants. In particular, planting activities during the wet weather season of late winter and early spring produce large volumes of very turbid water.

The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality worked along with the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Office of Soil and Water Conservation beginning in 2009 to implement agricultural practices, including nutrient management, conservation cover, prescribed grazing, crop rotation, irrigation land leveling, and forest buffer. By 2013 those actions resulted in a significant reduction in pollutants entering the waterway.



Map depicting the Mermentau River and its four largest tributaries, (from left to right) Bayou Nezpique, Bayou des Cannes, Bayou Plaquemine Brule, and Bayou Queue de Tortue. (courtesy Wikipedia)

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